



# Luxury

## History, Culture, Consumption

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rflu20>

## When Eroticism Makes Luxury Fashion Brands Fly: Introducing the Construct of Eroticism, Providing a First Measurement and Rank of Luxury Fashion Brands Using a Newly Developed “Brand Erotic Index”

Marc Paternot & Oliver Heil

To cite this article: Marc Paternot & Oliver Heil (2021): When Eroticism Makes Luxury Fashion Brands Fly: Introducing the Construct of Eroticism, Providing a First Measurement and Rank of Luxury Fashion Brands Using a Newly Developed “Brand Erotic Index”, *Luxury*, DOI: [10.1080/20511817.2021.1946293](https://doi.org/10.1080/20511817.2021.1946293)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/20511817.2021.1946293>



© 2021 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 22 Oct 2021.



[Submit your article to this journal](#)



[View related articles](#)



[View Crossmark data](#)



This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way.

# When Eroticism Makes Luxury Fashion Brands Fly: Introducing the Construct of Eroticism, Providing a First Measurement and Rank of Luxury Fashion Brands Using a Newly Developed “Brand Erotic Index”

Marc Paternot is a Ph.D. candidate in Marketing at the Johannes Gutenberg-University of Mainz (Germany). He holds an MBA from HEC Paris. He teaches at various business schools in France and Germany (ESCP, Neoma Reims, International School of Management Dortmund, Fresenius University of Applied Sciences Cologne). Prior to embracing the academic path, he fulfilled various marketing and sales managerial positions in international

**Marc Paternot and Oliver Heil**  
*Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz*

**ABSTRACT** This article introduces a new construct to the field of luxury research, namely eroticism. This construct is, to a limited degree, based on the extant knowledge as very little research seemingly exists on the construct which, otherwise, has been “around” for centuries. Next, the construct is

fast-moving consumer goods and luxury companies in Europe. His dissertation involves a broad inquiry into the potential of eroticism for luxury managers, esp. marketing managers in luxury fashion. [mpaternot@gmx.net](mailto:mpaternot@gmx.net)

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Oliver P. Heil (Ph.D.) is Chaired Professor of Marketing and Luxury. He holds a Ph.D. as well as a Master's degree from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School. He taught at Wharton, Columbia, UCLA, HKUST. His publications appeared in leading scientific journals and he co-authored several books on luxury, luxury management and competitive interaction. He served as academic trustee of MSI, editorial boards of JM, IJRM and serves on several scientific boards. His recent publications include research on premium & luxury pricing, evolution of the luxury domain and a Bayesian-based approach to luxury success. He is also the director of the Center for Research on Luxury.

operationalized, measured, and empirically validated. A newly developed index, the Brand Erotic Index is employed to rank luxury brands according to their erotic appeal. Interviews with various experts from different fields (luxury executives, marketing academics, fashion and design experts, and psychologists) allow to explore the relationship between eroticism and luxury fashion (and constitute our qualitative study). Next, in our more quantitative study, we analyze survey data from a sample of 167 participants who were asked to evaluate eroticism. In the second quantitative study, a different sample of 217 respondents rated their brand perception about the erotic appeal of nine luxury fashion brands (LFBs). An exploratory factor analysis suggested that that eroticism is a multi-faceted construct consisting of six distinct sub-constructs. Next, we applied multidimensional scaling (based on brand personality and brand style) and found that distinct positionings for most selected LFBs appear to exist. Our findings should help executives and designers of luxury goods or fashion in transforming the power of eroticism into concrete business and artistic propositions. The findings should also ignite future research.

**KEYWORDS:** luxury fashion brands, eroticism, ranking of luxury fashion brands, brand index

## Introduction

As many luxury markets mature, marketing managers as well as designers of luxury goods or fashion need to identify new avenues to pursue sales. Such avenues have typically become more abstract and subtle. For example, luxury products are often sold along the lines of offering consumers unique consumer experiences or detailed insights in the supply and value chains. In this paper, we offer another avenue along which luxury products and, especially, luxury fashion products, can be sold. This avenue, albeit being rather new to luxury and luxury fashion as an explicit avenue has been implicitly used numerous times and for a long time—we call that avenue eroticism.

Eroticism has played major role in human relationships and, thus, we maintain that eroticism also affects our affective, cognitive, and behavioral attitudes towards the purchase of goods. In particular Luxury Fashion Brands (LFBs), have exploited this notion for a rather long time as numerous fashion products, like Coco Chanel's suits for women or Virgil Abloh's men's jackets and hoodies show. While LFBs know how to play "this" right but prefer not to delve on the issue in public, at least in part due to the evolution of political correctness. Importantly, designers have actively exploited the implicit power of eroticism for decades. Equally importantly and surprisingly, no research conceptualized, measured, operationalized and

empirically validated the construct of eroticism. That is, very little is known about eroticism in relation to LFBs. As a result, much uncertainty exists about the relationship between eroticism and LFBs' consumption. Managers of LFBs are, thus, left with trial-and-error approaches. As a result, we pursue several goals with this study.

More precisely (given the considerable space constraints), our goals of this research include:

- to introduce, delineate, conceptualize and motive the construct of eroticism as a new and potentially powerful avenue to better market luxury products and, esp. luxury fashion
- to provide a short review of the literature pertaining to the construct of eroticism
- operationalize and measure the construct of eroticism
- to explore the relationship between eroticism and LFBs' consumption
- to develop a newly developed index, our Brand Erotic Index (BEI) to measure luxury fashion brands' erotic appeal (which may act as a moderator of this eroticism and LFBs' consumption relationship)
- to provide preliminary empirical evidence and, as a result, suggest several directions for future research

We note that our paper is, in a sense, preliminary since our study is the first to introduce the construct of eroticism to academic research. However, we strive to offer a rather complete literature review and a detailed conceptualization and operationalization of the construct. We provide several empirical analyses which, for reason that we detail below, may qualify to be a bit preliminary at this point.

## **Brief Review of the Extant Literature**

### ***Eroticism***

Eroticism's roots come from the terms "erotic" and "eros." Regarding the former, the etymology (source: <https://www.etymonline.com/word/desire>; retrieved 18.11.2020) comes from the French "érotique" and the Greek "erotikos" both referring to "passionate love" and "sexual love." "Eros" in Greek refers to the "god or personification of love" and to "love and desire." In common language, from 17th century till nowadays, a shift is observable from "love" over "sexual love" to the present "sexual desire." In the literature, eroticism has been defined in many ways from scholars from various fields. Due to his major contribution in revealing the depth of this concept, we highlight one quote coming from Bataille's seminal book "L'Erotisme," first published in French in 1957, regarding eroticism:

The "whole business of eroticism is to strike to the inmost core of the living being, so that the heart stands still."<sup>1</sup>

The three most recent and relevant research works about eroticism have been presented by Hakim, Sarpila, and Requena.

Hakim, a sociologist, published a forceful article named “Erotic Capital.”<sup>2</sup> In it, she highlights six interesting elements of Erotic Capital: beauty, sexual attractiveness, social, liveliness, social presentation and sexuality. She argues that these capabilities can be available from birth on or can also be nurtured throughout life.<sup>3</sup> Her theory of Erotic Capital is seen as the fourth element after the three (economic, social, cultural) theorized by Bourdieu in the 1980s. Hakim states that Erotic Capital theory is applicable “to all sexual interactions, heterosexual and homosexual, commercial and private, and to all age groups.”<sup>4</sup> She argues that it is probably the “most widespread and democratic form of capital.”<sup>5</sup> She stresses eroticism’s subversive character and its independence from control elements such as social class and status.<sup>6</sup> Sarpila was to our knowledge the first researcher, who has developed a scale of erotic capital, which relies on sixteen attitudinal variables considered to measure the performance and development of erotic capital.<sup>7</sup> Four factors were extracted: Identity, Fashion, Awareness, and Vanity. In relation to eroticism, the factors Identity and Fashion highlight the importance of physical appearance and consumption (especially of clothing, fashion, beauty products). Sarpila asserts that erotic capital is less a question of gender but more a question of consumption. Requena studies the phenomenon of erotic capital from a different perspective as he questions its impact on individuals’ well-being.<sup>8</sup> The erotic capital is defined here by beauty and attractiveness, which influences one’s socialization and power over others. Unfortunately, erotic capital is here measured by only one question (“How physically attractive or good-looking do you consider yourself for your age?”), which appears to be much too limited to grasp Hakim’s six facets.

The findings highlight erotic capital to be the most powerful form of capital without significant gender distinction. Frequently, and for reasons not known to us, a construct labeled “desire” appears to be related to eroticism. Thus, for completeness, we briefly discuss this seemingly related construct.

While numerous studies have attempted to give a robust definition of desire, we decide to highlight the one from Belk, Ger and Askegaard for its completeness and subtleness:

Desires [...] are overpowering; something we give in to; something that takes control of us and totally dominates our thoughts, feelings, and actions. Desire awakens, seizes, teases, titillates, and arouses. We battle, resist, and struggle with, or succumb, surrender, and indulge our desires.<sup>9</sup>

Scholars have debunked this construct in multiple ways highlighting its dynamic and motivational process,<sup>10</sup> its centrality to human motivation,<sup>11</sup> its differences from needs and wants,<sup>12</sup> its pivotal role to stabilize society’s political order,<sup>13</sup> its link to the Bataille’s notion of

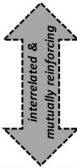
transgression, and its mimetic character.<sup>14</sup> In their “theory of desire,” Deleuze and Guattari link capitalism and psychological desire as the one and the same.<sup>15</sup> Kozinets, Patterson and Ashman, in their article the “Networks of desire,” show how technology fosters consumption through desire.<sup>16</sup> Eckhardt, Belk and Wilson emphasize that the increasing consumption of consumer goods and the influence of marketing have “democratized” the notion of desire.<sup>17</sup> Belk, Ger and Askegaard, using a quote from J. Duvignaud, summarize it nicely: “The human species is not a species of needs but of desires.”<sup>18</sup> We note that our section on operationalization and measurement of the construct of eroticism builds on this brief literature and provides more detail, esp. related to the sources for numerous items.

### **Luxury Fashion**

Since our focus is, to a considerable degree, to link eroticism and luxury fashion, a brief review of the literature pertaining to luxury fashion seems in order. To date, several studies have investigated luxury fashion and its position as a subset of the luxury personal goods category. We choose to highlight a pertinent definition from Heine about luxury fashion brands as they should be “regarded as images in the minds of consumers that comprise associations about a high level of price, quality, aesthetics, rarity and specialty.”<sup>19</sup> In line with Bain’s classification (Altagamma 2018 Worldwide Luxury Market Monitor—D’Arpizio, Levato), we focus on the heart and core of luxury fashion, namely apparel and accessories. Scholars have been numerous in researching on the characteristics of luxury fashion brands. To name a few, Phau and Prendergast highlight four attributes,<sup>20</sup> Beverland characterizes LFBs with six factors,<sup>21</sup> or Okonkwo with ten descriptive items.<sup>22</sup> With their nine luxury fashion brands components, Fionda and Moore significantly contribute to the understanding of this diverse product category.<sup>23</sup> The personality approach of luxury fashion brands has been researched as well. Heine contributes to it by presenting five dimensions and fifty-two associated brand personality traits.<sup>24</sup> More recently, Tong, Su and Xu displayed six personality factors for LFBs.<sup>25</sup> Categorization of luxury fashion brands has also been researched. Turunen significantly contributes to the literature with six criteria.<sup>26</sup> Phan’s categorization of luxury fashion brands in three types based on consumers’ perception is insightful.<sup>27</sup> Kapferer and Bastien make a clear distinction between luxury, fashion, and premium.<sup>28</sup> Luxury fashion would be located within their positioning triangle between the luxury dimension and the fashion dimension, though very close to the luxury pole. More recently, Loureiro, Plaza and Taghian have investigated the relationship between LFBs and consumption.<sup>29</sup> De la Ballina and de la Ballina have linked Luxury Fashion to Generations Y and Z.<sup>30</sup> Unsurprisingly, Luxury fashion brands face internally and externally strong debate to cope with sustainability trends, as Campos Franco, Hussain, and McColl rightly put forward.<sup>31</sup>

Table 1 Interrelationship between eroticism and luxury fashion.

Eroticism			Luxury Fashion		
18 elements/factors of Erotic Capital / Eroticism 6 elements of Erotic Capital (Hakim 2010)			23 characteristics of Luxury fashion		
Beauty			Rarity		
Sexual attractiveness			High level price		
Social			Aesthetics		
Liveliness			Identity		
Social presentation			Exclusivity		
Sexuality			Creativity		
4 Factors for performing/developing Erotic capital (Sarpila 2014)			History		
Identity			Culture, art, and design		
Fashion			Appealing products		
Awareness			Emotional appeal		
Vanity			Craftmanship		
2 elements of Erotic capital impacting well-being (Requena 2017)			Status		
Attractiveness			Instrument of power over others		
Beauty			Sign of success		
6 factors of Eroticism (Paternot and Heil 2021)			Social stratification		
Urging impulse			In the zeitgeist		
Inappropriate conduct			Attractiveness		
Sexual fascination			Excessiveness		
Delighted mood			Seduction		
Glamorous touch			Self-seduction		
Liberated self			Desirable		
Source:			Helps to express my personality		
literature review and research on eroticism (Paternot/Heil 2021)			High quality		
			Source:		
			literature review and experts' interviews findings		



Eroticism and luxury fashion are deeply related, intertwined, and mutually reinforcing (Table 1).

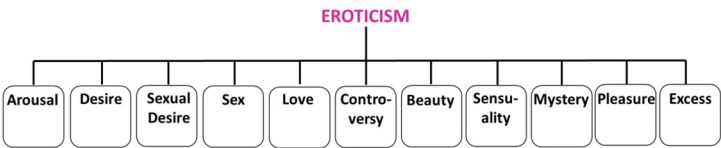
Hakim’s main assertion about eroticism is that it would be the “most widespread and democratic form of capital.”<sup>32</sup> Therefore, available to most human beings. Consequently, we argue that many individuals rely (even though very often without admitting it in public) on their erotic-being and trust their erotic appeal. Possibly, their erotic self is based on their self-perceived attractiveness and desirability. They have a quest for pleasure, liberty, sensuality, and sexual desire. Important to them is what they consider beautiful, what deeply express who they are, and what underline their appetite for some excessiveness. To live it concretely and earthly, they argue that they deserve the corresponding sublime almost perfect stylistic sheath: luxury fashion. Those apparel and accessories have to match their erotic being and erotic appeal. Wearing luxury fashion boosts their self-confidence, self-esteem, and identity. They feel attractive, desirable, and well positioned to seduce anyone they target. It helps them to express their multi-layered personality. Towards others, they use luxury fashion as a sign of success, an instrument of power, a status signal indicating that they have reached a certain level of social stratification.

**Research Approach and Findings**  
***Operationalizing and Measuring Eroticism***

To start, we built on our literature review above but now zoom in on the levels of numerous items. An extensive literature review from different fields (sociology, sexology, biology, religion, psychology, anthropology, philosophy, architecture, marketing) has helped to conceptualize eroticism in eleven subconstructs (Figure 1).

An items’ generation phase allowed to gather 143 items across the eleven subconstructs to depict eroticism. Then, a multistage items’ purification phase helped to reduce the number of items from 143 to 93. Therefore, the final eroticism scale is composed of 93 items across the eleven subconstructs (Table 2). The scale shows a balanced composition of the three attitudes types (32% of items were cognitive attitudes, 28% affective, and 40% behavioral), as shown in Figure 2.

The 93-items identified in the literature as potentially pertaining to eroticism were translated into a survey. Each of the 93 items was either phrased in a sentence or used in a differential scale. During

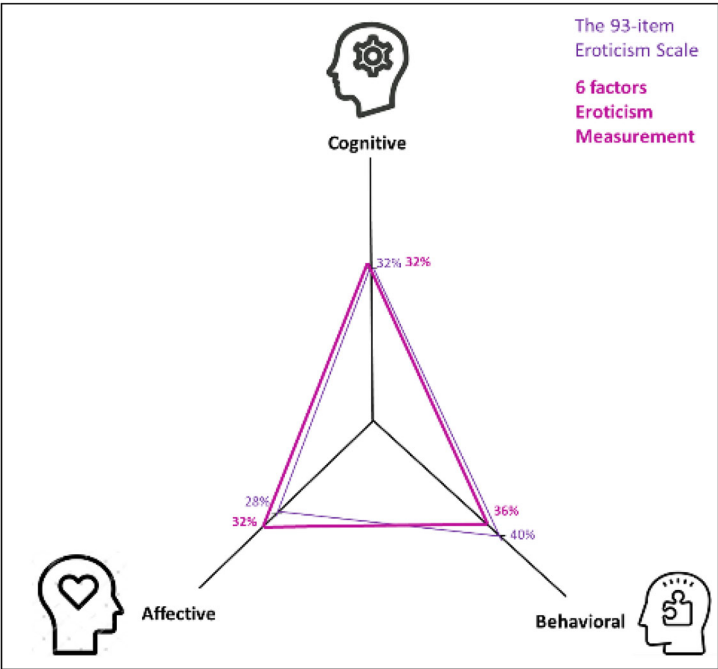


**Figure 1**  
Eroticism’s conceptual model in 11 subconstructs.



Table 2 Eroticism’s 93-item scale across 11 subconstructs.

93-item eroticism scale										
11 selected constructs explaining conceptually eroticism										
Arousal	Desire	Sexual desire	Sex	Love	Controversy	Beauty	Sensuality	Mystery	Pleasure	Excess
Sexy	Seduction	Amorous	Camal	Deep affection	Indecent	Aesthetic	Multi-sensory	Fantasies	Hedonism	Immoderacy
Impulsive	Blinded	Libidinous	Body	Intimacy	Immoral	Taste	Scent	Exotic	Self-indulgence	Disinhibition
Exhilarating	Dream	Disturbed	Energised	Animated	Contentious	Attractiveness	Tactile	Magic	Gratification	Self-abandonment
Attracted	Admiration	Horny	Genitals	Possession	Unacceptable	Look	Visual	Sacredness	Joyful	Irrational
Awake	Craving	Hot	Proximity	Faithful	Shocking	Elegance	Questionable	Ambiguity	Celebration	Risky activities
Enthusiast	Imagination	Erogenous	Orgasm	Passionate	Provocative	Sublimation	Taboo	Weird	Altruism	Incongruity
Interested	Anxious	Confused	Open-minded	Dependent	Transgressive	Appearance	Sense of humour	Fascination	Self-fulfilment	Danger
	Rejected	Lustful	Free	Languished	Sinful	Care			Outgoing	Loss of control
	Rejuvenated		Nudity		Voyeurism	Self-confidence			Positive	Perversion
			Relaxed							Harmful



**Figure 2**  
Attitudinal composition of eroticism.

the empirical phase (March to June 2019) 167 respondents (60% women, 40% men, age range 20–69 years; in majority residents in Germany) rated the items on a Likert scale (1 to 7).

An Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted on the data gathered in the survey. The data are suitable for an EFA as the KMO lies at 0.648 and the Bartlett's test is significant. The factors' extraction method chosen was Principal Axis Factoring. Three factors' retention methods (Scree test, Minimum Average Partial method, and Parallel Analysis) were used and they indicated that three to nine factors should be retained. Regarding the factors' rotation method, we opted for an oblique rotation method, as we assume the factors to be somehow correlated. Specifically, Promax was favored over Direct Oblimin for its ability to cope with large data set. Both the interpretation of the Pattern/Structure matrices and the analysis of the items' loadings, communalities and factors scores make it clear that six factors best reveal eroticism as a multi-faceted construct (Table 3).

**Table 3 6** factors retained for 93-item eroticism scale.

<i>Factor's rank</i>	<i>Ranking based on variables' loadings on each factor (Pattern Matrix)</i>	<i>Variables' loadings (Pattern matrix)</i>	<i>Communalities (after extraction)</i>	<i>Factor Scores (Regression method)</i>
1	Seduction—I will show the best side of mine in order to please him her—Desire Admiration—I am impressed by him her—Desire Hot—I have strong feelings for him her—Sexual Desire Imagination—I say to myself that I want to spend time with him her—Desire	0.731  0.702 0.681 0.615	0.702  0.673 0.585 0.631	0.164  0.217 0.117 0.139
2	Craving—I could do anything to see him her soon again—Desire Erogenous—It gives me pleasure to touch him her—Sexual Desire Danger—When I see a car driving very fast in the city centre—Excess Perversion—When I read about the actual diesel scandal in the German automotive industry—Excess Selfabandonment—When I see someone taking hard drugs—Excess Irrational—When a politician wants to ban immediately without notice all types of cars for environmental concerns—Excess Immoderacy—When I see someone drinking till uncounsciousness—Excess	0.436 0.409 0.837 0.739  0.603 0.600 0.563	0.725 0.719 0.712 0.755  0.661 0.494 0.752	0.117 0.168 0.320 0.244  0.147 0.068 0.222
3	Incongruity—When I am aware of the yearly salaries in millions euros of average football players in the German Bundesliga—Excess Harmful—When I see corporate activities endangering essential environmental standards for the well being of our children—Excess Genitals—I am interested in his her sexual organs—Sex Orgasm—I want at last to experience orgasm—Sex	0.537  0.442  0.833 0.752	0.517  0.754  0.760 0.540	0.022  0.148  0.405 0.123

*(Continued)*

Table 3 (Continued).

Factor's rank	Ranking based on variables' loadings on each factor (Pattern Matrix)	Variables' loadings (Pattern matrix)	Communalities (after extraction)	Factor Scores (Regression method)
4	Carnal—I have a fleshly appetite for him/her—Sex	0.659	0.629	0.171
	Nudity—I appreciate his/her unclothed appearance—Sex	0.552	0.512	0.047
	Positive—How do you feel when you are pleased—Pleasure	0.951	0.753	0.374
	Joyful—How do you feel when you are pleased—Pleasure	0.726	0.745	0.223
5	Outgoing—How do you feel when you are pleased—Pleasure	0.487	0.612	0.089
	Sublimation—The striking dress of a movie star on the red carpet at Cannes film festival—Beauty	0.694	0.720	0.294
	Appearance—Most of the models on cosmetics fragrances commercials—Beauty	0.670	0.599	0.159
	Multisensory—When I enjoy the look and feel of a luxurious leather bag—Sensuality	0.613	0.540	0.128
6	Possession—I sometimes enjoy taking my partner's life into control—Love	0.455	0.548	0.106
	Visual—When people look at me when I dance—Sensuality	0.445	0.527	0.088
	Free—How do you usually feel after you've had sexual intercourse with someone—Sex	0.946	0.719	0.224
	Relaxed—How do you usually feel after you've had sexual intercourse with someone—Sex	0.726	0.739	0.309
	Openminded—How do you usually feel after you've had sexual intercourse with someone—Sex	0.606	0.765	0.269

Using the expertise and experience of a number of colleagues from a variety of disciplines as well as managers working in the luxury domain, we labeled the factors as follows:

- 1st factor: Urging impulse
- 2nd factor: Inappropriate conduct
- 3rd factor: Sexual fascination
- 4th factor: Delighted mood
- 5th factor: Glamorous touch
- 6th factor: Liberated self

Based on the findings of our analyses, esp. the (Promax factor analysis), we contend that eroticism is composed of six subscales (factors). Not surprisingly, as they are factors, they show rather good level of internal consistency as indicated by sizeable Cronbach Alpha's (Table 4). For completeness, we present the results corresponding to our factors.

**Table 4** Subscales' reliability.

	<i>Cronbach's Alpha (standardized)</i>	<i>Number of items</i>
1st Factor 'Urging impulse'	0.788	6
2nd Factor 'Inappropriate conduct'	0.833	7
3rd Factor 'Sexual fascination'	0.766	4
4th Factor 'Delighted mood'	0.758	3
5th Factor 'Glamorous touch'	0.716	5
6th Factor 'Liberated self'	0.782	3

In addition, we looked at socio-demographic variables such as gender, age, etc. and investigated any differences within our sample. Based on an independent t-test, gender differences affect two factors, namely Delighted mood and Glamorous touch (both at  $p < 0.01$ ). Regarding the former, women seem to assess eroticism with even more pleasurable and positive aspects than men do. Regarding Glamorous touch, this is even more striking, here women associate much more than men eroticism with sensuality and beauty. Both tests indicate a medium effect size.

The age also plays a role in different appreciations of eroticism. Based on an independent t-test, age differences (we constituted two groups: 20 to 39 years old and 40 to 69 years old) affect three factors, namely Inappropriate conduct, Sexual fascination, and Glamorous touch (all at  $p < 0.05$ ). As expected, older people seem to associate eroticism with a more reprehensible behavior. More surprisingly, older people connect eroticism more with sexual aspects than younger would do. Finally, regarding eroticism's glamour characteristic, younger people seem to have a different approach. They link it more with stunning look and flamboyance than older people

would do. For completeness, we state the age classes selected were a bit arbitrary. However, since the lower bound for younger people is half the lower bound for older people and the upper bounds are almost as different. Thus, we think that, on the grounds of face validity, the classes are different. More tests can, of course, be run if desired.

Finally, the six-factor model shows a similar balanced mix of attitudes as the overall 93-item eroticism scale. This has been achieved in a theory-free fashion, it is solely the outcome of the empirical study. Eroticism is at its core a balanced aggregate of cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects (Figure 2). Affective items rely on personal feelings that respondents associate with eroticism (i.e. item “hot”: I have strong feelings for him/her). Equally important were the cognitive items (based on imagining and remembering experiences) and the behavioral variables (linked to act). This makes eroticism an extraordinary construct to study and to manipulate operationally as it deeply impacts the individuals’ mental structure.

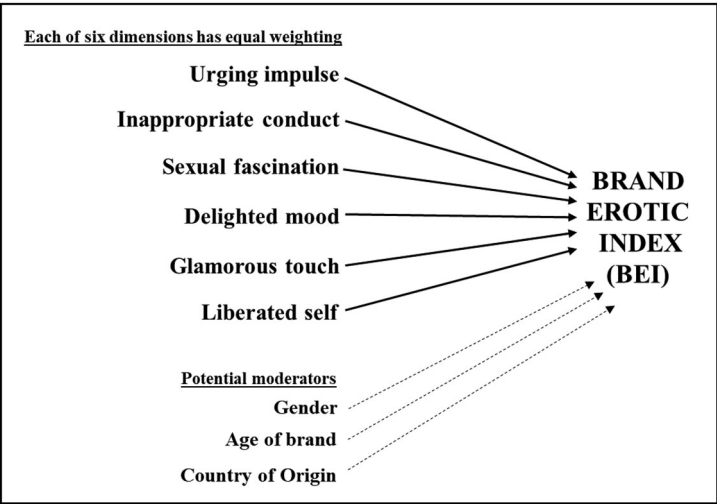
Overall, we maintain that we successfully measure the construct of eroticism. Importantly, we found that the construct of eroticism is indeed rather complex and multi-faceted. Our results suggest that six sub-constructs establish the construct of eroticism. We venture the guess that certain subconstructs may have larger or smaller bearings to certain products in the domain of luxury fashion. However, we are pleased to report that each of our sub-constructs reached a Cronbach alfa larger than the .7 threshold. We also note that we omitted a sizeable number of items that resulted from our literature review—if this was due to a convolution of times remains unclear at this point.

### ***Brand Erotic Index (BEI)***

Next, we develop a new index using our newly found sub-constructs of eroticism. That is, our Brand Erotic Index (BEI) assesses a brand’s erotic appeal based on brand perception.

We take the liberty to present our BEI as its implications can have immediate and important implications for managers and designers of luxury fashion products alike.

The BEI and its formula are based on the construct’s six dimensions (Figures 3 and 4).



**Figure 3**  
BEI conceptual framework.

$$BEI (Brand i) = \sum_{n=1}^n \frac{Brand\ mean\ i\ Dimension\ 1 + \dots + Brand\ mean\ i\ Dimension\ n}{n}$$

**Figure 4**  
BEI formula.

### Method

In this quantitative study, we test the relationship between consumers' brand perception and LFBs' erotic appeal based on the construct's six dimensions. At consumer level, what influence brand perception are mostly five drivers, as illustrated for Versace™ (Table 5), a LFB for which we assumed a strong erotic appeal.

We chose 9 luxury fashion brands for this study, which had to fulfill the following requirements: have their core business in fashion and accessories, appeal both to women and men, be known to a Western audience, have a high brand awareness, and be perceived as a luxury brand (Table 6).

Then, we classified them in three groups (Figure 5) using a content analysis, our own intuition and inputs from colleagues and other experts. In each group, a similar level of erotic appeal was assumed. Our content analysis was based on articles, videos, photographs, interviews, social media contributions, brands' websites, brands' official reports.

In the present quantitative study, the sample is composed mostly of students from the Generations Y and Z. Data are collected from 3

Table 5 Versace™ brand perception influenced by 5 drivers.

Versace

Extracts/illustrations

1. Media's coverage on brand's DNA

(i.e. articles, social media contributions)

"Aura high-maintenance of glamour," "formula of frank eroticism," "glamorous," "loves exaggeration," "fun mantra," "colorful, loud, unabashed," "sex sells also at the core of the brand," "sexualized aesthetic," "desirable," "flamboyance creative director," "brand's desirability," "aggressive style," "seduction," "extravagant," "provocative," "passionate and powerful," "sensual," "pure desire," "original and colorful creations," "sensational," "hottest fashion brand," "for a sensual and erotic woman," "dresses lovers and prostitutes."

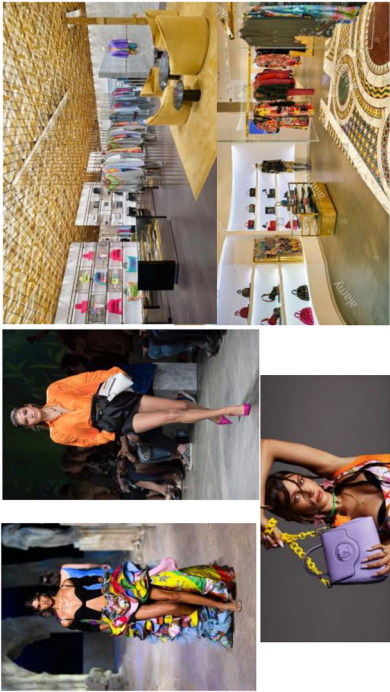
2. Brand's own communication on its DNA

(i.e. official website, annual report)

"Strong and fearless designs," "addressing a global audience," "strengthen its position in contemporary culture," "synonymous with Italian glamour and style," "iconic and unmistakable style."

3. Consumer's own brand experience

and its match with the DNA communicated by the media and the brand  
(i.e. photographs and videos of runway' shows, ad campaigns, stores' experiences)



(Continued)



Table 5 (Continued).

Versace

Extracts/Illustrations

4. Brand's key elements  
(i.e. logo, symbol, signature, muse)



Brand's symbol: Medusa

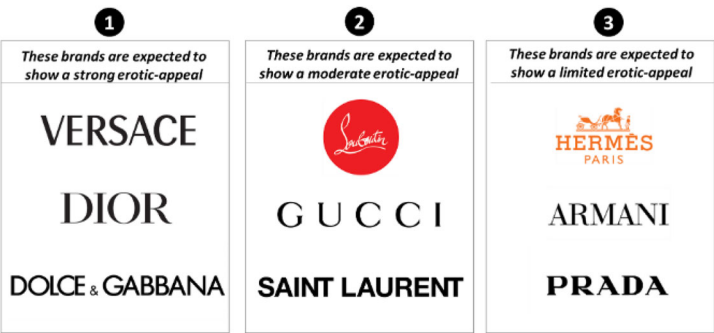
From the Greek mythology, one of the three monstrous Gorgons with a human female head with living venomous snakes in place of hair. Those who looked at her into her eyes were turned to stone. It represents both beauty and terror. Ravishingly beautiful and desirable. Threatful and exciting.

5. Brand's non-core activities  
(i.e. other product categories,  
licensing agreements)



**Table 6 9** selected luxury fashion brands key characteristics.

9 selected luxury fashion brands (core activities: apparel and accessories)					
Brand	Founding year	Country of origin	Brand's majority owner	Brand's majority owner nationality	Ownership structure
Armani	1975	Italy	G. Armani	Italy	Family-owned
Dior	1946	France	LVMH	France	Multi-Group
Dolce&Gabbana	1985	Italy	D.Dolce and S. Gabbana	Italy	Family-owned
Gucci	1921	Italy	Kering	France	Multi-Group
Hermès	1837	France	Hermès family holding	France	Family-owned
Louboutin	1991	France	C. Louboutin	France	Family-owned
Prada	1913	Italy	Prada Group	Italy	Multi-Group
Saint Laurent	1961	France	Kering	France	Multi-Group
Versace	1978	Italy	Capri Holdings (Michael Kohrs)	United States	Multi-Group



**Figure 5**  
9 brands classified in 3 groups.

sources: students from a fashion design institute, students from a business school, executives from a luxury department store at their headquarters. A total of 236 questionnaires were collected between August and October 2020 and 217 questionnaires were considered as valid for analysis. Out of 217 participants, 176 were less than 30 years therefore belonging to the Generations Y and Z. 70% of the participants were women, a large majority were singles living in Germany (Table 7).

**Table 7** Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents.



Group	Sub group	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	Below 30	176	81%
	30–39	21	10%
	40–49	6	3%
	50–59	7	3%
	60 and above	6	3%
	No answer	1	0%
	Total	217	100%
Gender	Female	152	70%
	Male	63	29%
	No answer	2	1%
	Total	217	100%
Marital status	Single	184	85%
	Married	25	12%
	Separated	2	1%
	Divorced	3	1%
	Widowed	2	1%
	No answer	1	0%
	Total	217	100%
Country of residence	Germany	181	83%
	Other	36	17%
	Total	217	100%

## Analysis

**BEI Ranking of 9 Luxury Fashion Brands.** The data obtained from the questionnaires have been analyzed with SPSS version 27 and the final ranking is reproduced in [Table 8](#).

**Brands' BEI and Gender as Potential Moderator.** Apart from Louboutin™, no gender difference seems to explain a difference of BEI based on the six eroticism's dimensions ([Table 9](#)). This could be

**Table 8** BEI ranking of 9 LFBs.

	BEI (out of 7)	BEI level	Brand perception
1. DIOR	4,85	high	➡ strong erotic-appeal
2. SAINT LAURENT	4,65	medium	➡ moderate erotic-appeal
3. PRADA	4,64		
4. VERSACE	4,55		
5. 	4,54		
6. GUCCI	4,47		
7. DOLCE & GABBANA	4,38		
8. ARMANI	3,99	low	➡ limited erotic-appeal
9. 	3,99		

**Table 9** Comparison of BEI scores according to gender.












Variable	Gender	N	X	St. D.	T	p
BEI Versace	Female	122	4.5	1.31	-1.5	0.1
	Male	46	4.8	1.22		
BEI Dior	Female	123	4.91	1.10	1.24	0.22
	Male	52	4.70	0.97		
BEI Hermès	Female	107	4.07	1.08	1.17	0.25
	Male	46	3.85	1.07		
BEI Louboutin	Female	96	4.69	1.16	2.70	0.00
	Male	38	4.09	1.16		
BEI Gucci	Female	121	4.46	1.25	-0.23	0.82
	Male	51	4.51	1.03		
BEI Saint Laurent	Female	103	4.63	1.20	-0.08	0.94
	Male	47	4.65	0.99		
BEI Dolce&Gabbana	Female	117	4.39	1.20	0.28	0.78
	Male	48	4.33	1.31		
BEI Armani	Female	105	3.93	1.20	-1.09	0.28
	Male	51	4.15	1.22		
BEI Prada	Female	118	4.71	1.16	1.09	0.28
	Male	53	4.49	1.27		

explained by the strong and global brand awareness of the selected LFBs, by their balanced product offerings (for women and men), their communication targeting almost equally men and women, and by now male luxury buyers being as interested as female luxury buyers.

Though, for the brand Louboutin™, at  $p$  value  $<0.01$ , the null hypothesis is rejected, and we can conclude that women and men differ on their appreciation of this brand. Women score higher (4,69 vs. 4,09), which means that they perceive the erotic appeal from Louboutin™ higher than men do. This is probably linked to the product offering, which is very dedicated to women, and because the brand Louboutin™ is still quite “new” in the men segment.

**Brands’ BEI and Country of Origin and Age of Brand as Potential Moderators.** As seen in the literature review earlier, Turunen lists six criteria to categorize LFBs.<sup>33</sup> Of these, two are of interest for our quantitative study: “country of origin” and “age of the brand”: They could possibly affect the relationship between eroticism’s dimensions and the brands’ BEI. Based on the nine selected LFBs, “country of origin” and “age of brand” do not seem to affect the relationship between eroticism’ dimensions and BEI (Table 10). To be an “Italian” or a “French” brand or to be an old or new brand do not lead to a higher or a lower erotic appeal, measured by BEI.

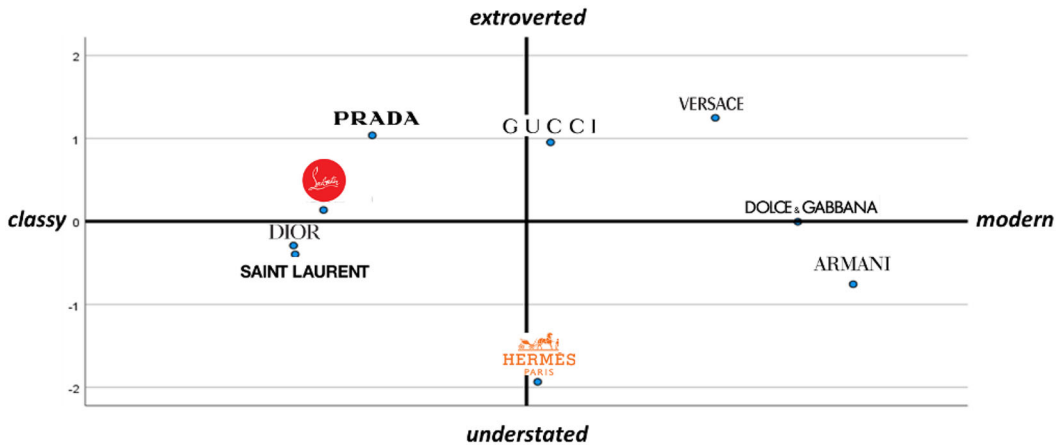
**Table 10** BEI and country of origin/age of brand.

	BEI (out of 7)	Country of Origin	Age of Brand
			Founded in
1. DIOR	4,85		“Traditional / iconic” 1946
2. SAINT LAURENT	4,65		“Traditional / iconic” 1961
3. PRADA	4,64		“Traditional / iconic” 1913
4. VERSACE	4,55		“New luxury” 1978
5. 	4,54		“New luxury” 1991
6. GUCCI	4,47		“Traditional / iconic” 1921
7. DOLCE & GABBANA	4,38		“New luxury” 1985
8. ARMANI	3,99		“New luxury” 1975
9.  HERMÈS PARIS	3,99		“Traditional / iconic” 1837

**Relationships’ Assessment between LFBs’ Erotic Appeal and Consumers’ Perception.** Based on our simple and initial classification described above, we linked the various brands to consumers’ perception about their levels of eroticism. We are glad to report that most of our initial classification were consistent with consumer perceptions as six relationships out of nine were confirmed (Table 11). Naturally, this finding is clearly preliminary and more detailed

Table 11 Relationships' assessment LFBs.

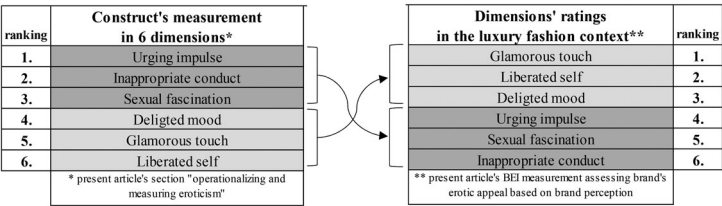
Relationships' assessment (R1–R9)	Result (BEI level)	Relationship
R1: <b>Versace</b> is perceived by consumers as having a <b>strong erotic appeal</b> associated with <b>high Brand Erotic Index</b>	Medium	Challenged
R2: <b>Dior</b> is perceived by consumers as having a <b>strong erotic appeal</b> associated with <b>high Brand Erotic Index</b>	High	Confirmed
R3: <b>Dolce&amp;Gabbana</b> is perceived by consumers as having a <b>strong erotic appeal</b> associated with <b>high Brand Erotic Index</b>	Medium	Challenged
R4: <b>Louboutin</b> is perceived by consumers as having a <b>moderate erotic appeal</b> associated with <b>medium Brand Erotic Index</b>	Medium	Confirmed
R5: <b>Gucci</b> is perceived by consumers as having a <b>moderate erotic appeal</b> associated with <b>medium Brand Erotic Index</b>	Medium	Confirmed
R6: <b>Saint Laurent</b> is perceived by consumers as having a <b>moderate erotic appeal</b> associated with <b>medium Brand Erotic Index</b>	Medium	Confirmed
R7: <b>Hermès</b> is perceived by consumers as having a <b>limited erotic appeal</b> associated with <b>low Brand Erotic Index</b>	Low	Confirmed
R8: <b>Armani</b> is perceived by consumers as having a <b>limited erotic appeal</b> associated with <b>low Brand Erotic Index</b>	Low	Confirmed
R9: <b>Prada</b> is perceived by consumers as having a <b>limited erotic appeal</b> associated with <b>low Brand Erotic Index</b>	Medium	Challenged



**Figure 6**  
BEI in multidimensional scaling.

research is needed to precisely investigate the causes of the linkages that we discovered. With a BEI of 4,85 Dior<sup>TM</sup> leads the rank and its assumed strong erotic-appeal was confirmed by the study. The alleged moderate erotic appeal for Louboutin<sup>TM</sup>, Gucci<sup>TM</sup>, and Saint Laurent<sup>TM</sup> was confirmed by the analysis for each brand. Hermès<sup>TM</sup> and Armani<sup>TM</sup> have the lowest BEI (both 3.99), which confirmed both initial assumption of a limited erotic appeal. Whereas, Versace<sup>TM</sup> and Dolce&Gabbana<sup>TM</sup> were expected to show even more erotic-appeal than the results displayed. Finally, the erotic appeal from Prada<sup>TM</sup> was higher than expected. Overall, less than one rating point separates the leader (Dior<sup>TM</sup>) from the last brand (Hermès<sup>TM</sup>). It highlights that in luxury fashion, most brands seem to play the erotic appeal, though some more and differently than others.

**Brands' BEI in a Multidimensional Setting.** Next, we explored the spatial relationships among the brands we considered. To do so, we employed the well-respected technique of multidimensional scaling. This technique employs similarity data to produce a multidimensional representation. However, most often, only two dimensions are considered for conceptual reasons, e.g. ease of interpretation and managerial use. Once the geographical representation has been obtained, the dimension needs to be named or labeled. Typically, researchers and managers work to name the dimensions and consumers help to validate the dimensions' names. Our efforts entailed labeling the two dimensions along two criteria (Figure 6). The first one is the "brand's style" in particular the one experienced by the customers ("When I wear brand X, it makes me feel xxx"). The second characteristics pertains with the "brand's personality" ("if the brand X was a friend, which adjective would you use to describe its personality"). Versace<sup>TM</sup> appears to be distinctly positioned as a rather extroverted brand with quite a modern style. On the other



**Figure 7**  
Eroticism's dimensions ranking.

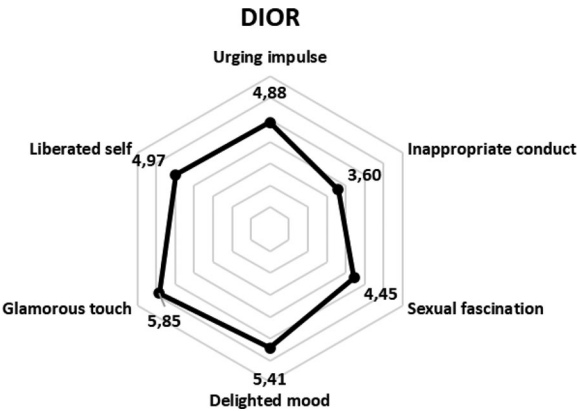
hand, Hermès<sup>TM</sup> is perceived as an understated brand with neither a modern nor a classy style. On the graph, Dior<sup>TM</sup> is located at the opposite side of Versace<sup>TM</sup>. It appears that respondents see in this brand both elegance and glamour. Its brand personality is balanced. The fact that the brand Saint Laurent<sup>TM</sup> is located on the graph directly next to Dior<sup>TM</sup> underlines that for the participants both brands have a lot in common (personality and style). From a business point of view, this can be assessed as a disadvantage as it can reveal a blurry positioning with not enough differentiating factors to allow a distinctive position in consumers' mind. Interestingly, the three brands (Armani<sup>TM</sup>, Dolce&Gabbana<sup>TM</sup>, and Versace<sup>TM</sup>) with a brand's style depicted as rather "modern" are in fact among the four youngest brands in the sample based on the year they were founded (1975, 1985, and 1978 respectively).

***Eroticism's Dimensions Ranking in a Luxury Fashion Context.*** Based on the data from BEI, in the context of luxury fashion, eroticism is perceived differently compared to the construct factor-analyzed (see "Operationalizing and Measuring Eroticism" section). Interestingly, the bottom 3 dimensions (Delighted mood, Glamorous touch, and Liberated self) become in a luxury fashion context the top three dimensions (Figure 7).

***Brands' Spider Webs Highlight LFBs' Erotic Appeal.*** The brands' spider web data are based on the dimensions' means per brand from the BEI survey of the nine selected LFBs. There seems to be two successful formula for a brand to achieve strong erotic-appeal in the context of luxury fashion.

The first one is based on the pattern stemming from the analysis' top three brands with the highest BEI (see the spider web from Dior<sup>TM</sup>—Figure 8), which indicates strong erotic appeal. According to the example of Dior<sup>TM</sup>, the first three dimensions in a luxury fashion context (Glamorous touch, Liberated self, Delighted mood) also appear here as the most important. This is complemented by the fourth dimension Urging impulse at a rather high level, which serves as a go-between with Sexual fascination and Inappropriate conduct. Adding to this mix a touch of implicit Sexual fascination and keeping its distance from too obvious Inappropriate conduct and one gets a well formulated brand's erotic appeal. Figure 9 illustrates our analysis.

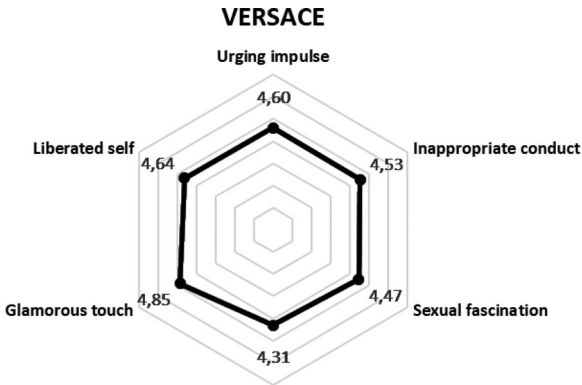




**Figure 8**  
Dior™ spider web.



**Figure 9**  
Illustration from Dior™ Haute Couture collection Spring-Summer 2020.



**Figure 10**  
Versace™ spider web.



**Figure 11**  
Illustration from Versace™ fashion show Spring-Summer 2020.

The second one is different and is based on the pattern shared by the brands ranked 4. to 7. (see the spider web from Versace™—Figure 10), based on medium to high Brand Erotic Indices, showing rather strong erotic appeal. Based on the results from Versace™, the formula is fairly simple. Achieving quite strong ratings on each of the six dimensions. By not neglecting any of the six dimensions, it results in a well-balanced and rounded erotic-appeal. Figure 11 illustrates our analysis.

Interestingly, on the multidimensional graph presented above Dior™ and Versace™ are almost oppositely located. There seems to be evidence for two different “formula” or “avenues” for brands to be perceived erotic.

### Directions for Future Research/Limitations

As most often, the shortcomings of a research paper directly translate into directions for future work. Due to space constraints, we list four research opportunities that we consider to have the much potential.

- Lack of data: With regard to the participants in the qualitative study, we acknowledge that 13 participants can be considered a rather small sample. Obviously, more data would help to validate our insights.
- Similarly, our insights should be calibrated across regions. Social standards, esp. during our times, differ much as to the appropriate level of eroticism. What may be considered sensual, sexy, funny and acceptable in Europe may obtain a much different evaluation in, say, China or America. The recent backlash for Dolce&Gabbana™ in China attests to that. More cross-cultural studies are clearly needed.
- The construct of eroticism and its sub-constructs may differ much in the relative importance across luxury fashion brands. An Italian brand like Versace™ may be able to afford more “urging impulse” while a French brand like Dior™ may fare best addressing eroticism employing the sub-constructs “delighted mood” and “glamorous touch.” Clearly, such research is pregnant with important meaning to practicing managers.
- Research should also investigate the link between our Brand Erotic Index and brands’ financial and commercial performance. That way, research could identify the degree to which the BEI may have the potential to moderate the relationship between eroticism, LFBs consumption as well as P&L.

### Conclusion and Outlook

The paper introduced a new and intriguing construct to the domain of luxury fashion and luxury management in general. During times when luxury products’ cores can oftentimes not be improved much,

design, new technology, consumer experience and emotional issues gain importance. We maintain that eroticism, especially in luxury fashion, has much potential to improve the domain of emotional issues. This seems to hold especially true during times of enormously important issues relating to political correctness, identity politics much increased sensitivity to persons' gender, sexuality, etc. In addition, these issues appear to differ much across the globe and, especially, between major markets involving the US, Central Europe, Eastern Europe, Asia (esp. China), Middle East, etc. and many developing countries. In short, eroticism is likely to possess much marketing power but needs to be carefully calibrated by luxury brand, luxury fashion product and geographic region. Things could hardly be more timely.

## NOTES

1. Bataille, *Erotism: Death and Sensuality*, 17.
2. Hakim, "Erotic Capital".
3. Hakim, "Erotic Capital," 501.
4. Hakim, "Erotic Capital," 506.
5. Hakim, "Erotic Capital," 502.
6. Hakim, "Erotic Capital," 510.
7. Sarpila, "Attitudes Towards Performing and Developing Erotic Capital in Consumer Culture."
8. Requena, "Erotic capital and subjective well-being."
9. Belk, Ger, and Askegaard, *The missing streetcar named desire in The Why of consumption* ed. S. Ratneshwar, D. Glen Mick, and C. Huffman, London: Routledge, 98–119, 99.
10. Belk, Ger, and Askegaard, "Metaphors of Consumer Desire," 371.
11. Boujbel and d'Astous, "Exploring the Feelings and Thoughts that Accompany the Experience of Consumption Desires," 219.
12. Belk, Ger and Askegaard, "The Fire of Desire: A Multisited Inquiry into Consumer Passion," 326–7.
13. Berry, *The idea of luxury: A conceptual and historical investigation*, 241.
14. Girard, Oughourlian and Lefort, *Things hidden since the foundation of the world*.
15. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*.
16. Kozinets, Patterson and Ashman, "Networks of Desire: How Technology Increases Our Passion to Consume."
17. Eckhardt, Belk and Wilson, "The rise of inconspicuous consumption," 809.
18. Belk, Ger, and Askegaard, "Metaphors of Consumer Desire," 368.
19. Heine, "The Personality of Luxury Fashion Brands," 156.
20. Phau and Prendergast, "Consuming luxury brands: The relevance of the 'Rarity Principle'."
21. Beverland, "Uncovering 'theories-in-use': building luxury wine brands."
22. Okonkwo, *Luxury Fashion Branding*.
23. Fionda and Moore, "The anatomy of the luxury fashion brand," 359.
24. Heine, "The Personality of Luxury Fashion Brands," 161.
25. Tong, Su and Xu, "Brand personality and its impact on brand trust and brand commitment," 200.
26. Turunen, "Challenging the hierarchical categorization of luxury fashion brands," 127.
27. Phan, "Do social media enhance consumer's perception and purchase intention of luxury fashion brands?," 84.
28. Kapferer and Bastien, *The luxury strategy*, 32–5.

29. Loureiro, Plaza and Taghian, "The effect of benign and malicious envies on desire to buy luxury fashion items."
30. de la Ballina and de la Ballina, "Scarcity as a Desirable Attribute of Luxury Fashion Brands in Millennial Marketing."
31. Campos Franco, Hussain and McColl, "Luxury fashion and sustainability: looking good together."
32. Hakim, "Erotic Capital," 502.
33. Turunen, "Challenging the hierarchical categorization of luxury fashion brands," 127.

### **Disclosure statement**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

### **Notes on contributors**

Marc Paternot is a Ph.D. candidate in Marketing at the Johannes Gutenberg-University of Mainz (Germany). He holds an MBA from HEC Paris. He teaches at various business schools in France and Germany (ESCP, Neoma Reims, International School of Management Dortmund, Fresenius University of Applied Sciences Cologne). Prior to embracing the academic path, he fulfilled various marketing and sales managerial positions in international fast-moving consumer goods and luxury companies in Europe. His dissertation involves a broad inquiry into the potential of eroticism for luxury managers, esp. marketing managers in luxury fashion.  
[mpaternot@gmx.net](mailto:mpaternot@gmx.net)

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Oliver P. Heil (Ph.D.) is Chaired Professor of Marketing and Luxury. He holds a Ph.D. as well as a Master's degree from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School. He taught at Wharton, Columbia, UCLA, HKUST. His publications appeared in leading scientific journals and he co-authored several books on luxury, luxury management and competitive interaction. He served as academic trustee of MSI, editorial boards of JM, IJRM and serves on several scientific boards. His recent publications include research on premium & luxury pricing, evolution of the luxury domain and a Bayesian-based approach to luxury success. He is also the director of the Center for Research on Luxury.

### **Bibliography**

- Bataille, G. *Erotism: Death and Sensuality*. 1986.
- Belk, R. W., G. Ger, and S. Askegaard. "Metaphors of Consumer Desire." *Advances in Consumer Research* no. 23 (1996): 368–373.
- Belk, R. W., G. Ger, and S. Askegaard. *The Missing Streetcar Named Desire in the Why of Consumption*. Edited by S. Ratneshwar, D. Glen Mick, and C. Huffman, 98–119. London: Routledge, 2000.

- Belk, Russell W., Güliz Ger, and Søren Askegaard. "The Fire of Desire: A Multisited Inquiry into Consumer Passion." *Journal of Consumer Research* 30, no. 3 (2003): 326–351. doi:[10.1086/378613](https://doi.org/10.1086/378613).
- Berry, C. J. *The Idea of Luxury: A Conceptual and Historical Investigation*. Vol. 30. Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Beverland, Michael. "Uncovering 'Theories-in-Use': Building Luxury Wine Brands." *European Journal of Marketing* 38, no. 3/4 (2004): 446–466. doi:[10.1108/03090560410518648](https://doi.org/10.1108/03090560410518648).
- Boujbel, Lilia, and Alain d'Astous. "Exploring the Feelings and Thoughts That Accompany the Experience of Consumption Desires." *Psychology & Marketing* 32, no. 2 (2015): 219–231. doi:[10.1002/mar.20774](https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.20774).
- Campos Franco, Jacqueline, Dildar Hussain, and Rod McColl. "Luxury fashion and sustainability: Looking good together." *Journal of Business Strategy* 41, no. 4 (2019): 55–61. doi:[10.1108/JBS-05-2019-0089](https://doi.org/10.1108/JBS-05-2019-0089).
- de la Ballina, J. F., and I. de la Ballina. "Scarcity as a desirable attribute of luxury fashion brands in millennial marketing." *Market-Tržište* 31, no. 2 (2019): 153–170. doi:[10.22598/mt/2019.31.2.153](https://doi.org/10.22598/mt/2019.31.2.153).
- Deleuze, G., and F. Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983.
- Eckhardt, Giana M., Russell W. Belk, and Jonathan A. J. Wilson. "The Rise of Inconspicuous Consumption." *Journal of Marketing Management* 31, no. 7–8 (2015): 807–826. doi:[10.1080/0267257X.2014.989890](https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2014.989890).
- Fionda, Antoinette M., and Christopher M. Moore. "The Anatomy of the Luxury Fashion Brand." *Journal of Brand Management* 16, no. 5–6 (2009): 347–363. doi:[10.1057/bm.2008.45](https://doi.org/10.1057/bm.2008.45).
- Girard, René, Jean-Michel Oughourlian, and Guy Lefort. *Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World: Research*. 1987.
- Hakim, C. "Erotic Capital." *European Sociological Review* 26, no. 5 (2010): 499–518. doi:[10.1093/esr/jcq014](https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcq014).
- Heine, Klaus. "The Personality of Luxury Fashion Brands." *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing* 1, no. 3 (2010): 154–163. doi:[10.1080/20932685.2010.10593067](https://doi.org/10.1080/20932685.2010.10593067).
- Kapferer, Jean-Noel, and Vincent Bastien. *The Luxury Strategy: Break the Rules of Marketing to Build Luxury Brands*. London: Kogan Page, 2012.
- Kozinets, Robert, Anthony Patterson, and Rachel Ashman. "Networks of Desire: How Technology Increases Our Passion to Consume." *Journal of Consumer Research* 43, no. 5 (2017): 659–682.
- Loureiro, Sandra M. C., Maria A. P. de Plaza, and Mehdi Taghian. "The Effect of Benign and Malicious Envy on Desire to Buy Luxury Fashion Items." *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* 52 (2020): 101688. doi:[10.1016/j.jretconser.2018.10.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2018.10.005).

- Okonkwo, U. *Luxury Fashion Branding: Trends, Tactics, Techniques*. 1st ed. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK; Imprint; Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- Phan, Michel. "Do Social Media Enhance Consumer's Perception and Purchase Intention of Luxury Fashion Brands?" *Vikalpa: The Journal for Decision Makers* 36, no. 1 (2011): 81–84.
- Phau, I., and G. Prendergast. "Consuming Luxury Brands: The Relevance of the 'Rarity Principle'." *Journal of Brand Management* 8, no. 2 (2000): 122–138. doi:[10.1057/palgrave.bm.2540013](https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.bm.2540013).
- Requena, Felix. "Erotic Capital and Subjective Well-Being." *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 50 (2017): 13–18. doi:[10.1016/j.rssm.2017.04.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rssm.2017.04.001).
- Sarpila, Outi. "Attitudes towards Performing and Developing Erotic Capital in Consumer Culture." *European Sociological Review* 30, no. 3 (2014): 302–314. doi:[10.1093/esr/jct037](https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jct037).
- Tong, Xiao, Jin Su, and Yingjiao Xu. "Brand Personality and Its Impact on Brand Trust and Brand Commitment: An Empirical Study of Luxury Fashion Brands." *International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education* 11, no. 2 (2018): 196–209. doi:[10.1080/17543266.2017.1378732](https://doi.org/10.1080/17543266.2017.1378732).
- Turunen, L. L. M. "Challenging the Hierarchical Categorization of Luxury Fashion Brands." *Nordic Journal of Business* 64, no. 2 (2015): 119–138.